

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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EUR-12 /104 W

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R 171106Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2707

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

C O N F I D E N T I A L OUAGADOUGOU 3668

ABIDJAN FOR USDAO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, UV, ML

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT LAMIZANA

REF: STATE 280075

1. PRESIDENT LAMIZANA ASKED TO SEE ME URGENTLY EVENING NOVEMBER 16. HE REFERRED TO CURRENT VISIT OF MALIAN DEFENSE MINISTER AND SAID THAT BOTH MALI AND UPPER VOLTA HAD BEEN LARGELY SUCCESSFUL IN CALMING THEIR POPULATIONS FOLLOWING THE BORDER DISPUTE AND THAT, ON THE SURFACE AT LEAST, IT APPEARED THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD RETURNED TO NORMAL.

2. HOWEVER, PRESIDENT CONTINUED, FACT REMAINED THAT USSR CONTINUED TO POUR NEW ARMANENTS INTO MALI AND THAT GOUV WAS DEEPLY WORRIED. HE SAID HE WAS WELL INFORMED ABOUT THE STATE OF READINESS OF MALIAN ARMED FORCES AND HE KNEW THAT; IN CASE OF CONFLICT, THE VOLTAN ARMY WOULD BE NO MATCH FOR THEM. THERE WERE GRUMBLINGS AMONG VOLTAN POPULATION TO THE EFFECT THAT GOUV, ALTHOUGH LED BY A MILITARY REGIME, WAS NOT PROVIDING ADEQUATELY FOR THE DEFENSE OF
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THE COUNTRY. HE SAID HE HAD SET UP A MILITARY COMMISSION, HEADED

BY THE FORMER MINISTER OF PLAN, MAJOR ANTOINE DAKOURE, TO SUPERVISE THE PURCHASE OF NEW ARMANETS, BUT THAT THE COMMISSION SO FAR HAD HAD VERY LITTLE SUCCESS. THIS WAS WHY HE FELT HE HAD TO TURN ONCE MORE TO THE UNITED STATES FOR HELP.

3. I TOLD LAMIZANA THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT, HAVING COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE BORDER DIPUSTE BETWEEN MALI AND UPPER VOLTA WAS SOLVED, HAD LIFTED THE EMBARGO ON SALES OF ARMS TO THE TWO COUNTRIES. I SAID I ASSUMED THAT AMBASSADOR YAGUIBOU WAS IN THE PROCESS OF COMPLETING THE PURCHASE OF SMALL ARMS WHICH HE HAD INITIATED SEVERAL MONTHS AGO. LAMIZANA SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD NOTHING OF THIS FROM YAGUIBOU. HE SEEMED TO BE PLEASED BUT SAID THAT UPPER VOLTA NEEDED MUCH MORE THAN SMALL ARMS. IN CASE OF CONFLICT WITH MALI, THE VOLTAN ARMED FORCES WOULD NEED TANKS, ARTILLERY AND AIRPLANES. HE ASKED IF THESE COULD BE OBTAINED IN THE UNITED STATES ON CREDIT.

4. I EXPLAINED TO PRESIDENT LAMIZANA THAT THE PRESENT MOOD IN THE U.S. CONGRESS WAS NOT FAVORABLE TO U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE SALE OF AMRS ABROAD EXCEPT FOR A FEW KEY COUNTRIES WHERE U.S. SECURITY INTERESTS WERE AT STAKE. LAMIZANA COUNTERED THAT THE U.S. COULD NOT IGNORE WHAT THE SOVIETS WERE DOING IN MALI, HE SAID VOLTAN OFFICERS HAD BEEN FRIGHTED BY THE PRO-SOVIET SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED BY THE NINE MALIAN OFFICERS WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED DEFENSE MINISTER DOUKARA ON HIS VISIT TO UPPER VOLTA. HE SAID THEY EVEN SPOKE RUSSIAN AMONG THEMSELVES.

5. LAMIZANA REFERRED ONCE MORE TO THE PURCHASE OF A C-130 WHICH HE SAID WAS BADLY NEEDED FOR THE TRAINING OF PARATROOPERS. HE EXPLAINED THAT PARATROOPERS WERE REQUIRED TO PRACTICE JUMPING AT REGULAR INTERVALS BUT THAT UPPER VOLTA HAD NO AIRPLANE FOR THIS PURPOSE. HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO BORROW ONE FROM NIGER BUT THAT WOULD BE A ONE-SHOT AFFAIR WHICH WOULD NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

6. ON LEAVING, I GAVE LAMIZANA NO ENCOURAGEMENT BUT TOLD HIM THAT I WOULD REPORT ON CONVERSATION TO THE DEPARTMENT. HE DID NOT PRESS ME FURTHER.

7. COMMENT: I GATHER FROM COMMENTS MADE TO BE SUBSEQUENTLY BY FINANCE MINISTER KALMOGO, THAT THERE WAS A MEETING OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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ARMAMENTS COMMISSION: CHAIRED BY DAKOURE, DURING THE AFTERNOON OF NOVEMBER 16. I ASSUME THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION URGED PRESIDENT LAMIZANA TO RENEW HIS PLEA FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE. I HOPE DEPARTMENT CAN RESPOND FAVORABLY TO LAMIZANA'S REQUEST AND WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING HOW UPPER VOLTA MIGHT QUALIFY FOR FMS CREDITS. I UNDERSTAND MALI ALREADY QUALIFIES FOR SUCH CREDITS.
GRAHAM

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